

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13
DHA-02 ACDA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 /082 W
-----122049Z 021680 /64

R 111325Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY MASERU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6613
INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY MBABANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MASERU 0044

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, MASS, LT
SUBJECT: CALL ON PRIMIN JONATHAN: HUMAN RIGHTS AND POLITICAL
LIBERTIES IN LESOTHO

REF: MASERU 0030

1. THE PM EXPRESSED CONGRATULATIONS TO THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE US ON 200 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE AND REFERRED TO CELEBRATION IN 1976 OF LESOTHO'S 10 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE. THE US, HE SAID, HAD SET AN EXAMPLE IN ITS FIGHT FOR INDEPENDENCE. THE PEOPLE OF LESOTHO HAVE ALSO FOLLOWED THE STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN LIBERTIES AND INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM IN THE US. THE PM THEN NOTED THAT LESOTHO'S INDEPENDENCE CONSTITUTION ALSO CONTAINED ARTICLES THAT PROVIDED FOR FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS. IT WAS WITH "REGRET", HE SAID, THAT IT HAD BEEN NECESSARY TO "SUSPEND" THE CONSTITUTION; HE SAID HE USED THE WORD "REGRET" PURPOSELY.

2. THE REASONS FOR THE SUSPENSION OF THE CONSTITUTION WERE CLEAR, HE SAID: THE OPPOSITION HAD USED THE CLAUSES PROVIDING FOR "FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS" IN AN "IRRESPONSIBLE MANNER". INSTEAD OF USING THEM "AS INTENDED", THE OPPOSITION USED THEM FOR SUBVERSION. THE PM SAID HE ANTICIPATED THE COMMENT THAT HE WAS
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SIMPLY ARGUING HIS OWN CAUSE. BUT LESOTHO NOW ENJOYS INTERNAL STABILITY AND, IN THE FUTURE, THERE WILL AGAIN BE PROVISION FOR FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS.

3. THE PM SAID HIS GOVERNMENT REALIZES THE GREAT US CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS; HE AGREES AND UNDERSTANDS THIS US CONCERN. HOWEVER, LESOTHO IS A DEVELOPING COUNTRY, IT IS MAKING PROGRESS. IT FALTERS,

STANDS, BUT CONTINUES MOVING FORWARD. AT PRESENT LESOTHO ONLY
"ASKS FOR TIME; TIME IS ESSENTIAL." THE PM SAID I WOULD HEAR A
LOT OF GOOD AND BAD ABOUT HIM. HE SAID HE WAS SPEAKING FRANKLY;
HE KNEW I WOULD HEAR THINGS. HE URGED ONLY THAT I STUDY THE
SITUATION FOR MYSELF AND NOT FORM CONCLUSIONS BASED ON WHAT
OTHERS SAY.

4. AFTER REMAINING IMMOBILE DURING THE PM'S EXPLANATION, I
COMMENTED THAT HE HAD RIGHTLY DETECTED A GREAT CONCERN FOR HUMAN
RIGHTS IN THE US. THE PM COMMENTED AGAIN THAT LESOTHO NEEDED
ONLY TIME TO RETURN TO A CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND RESPECT
FOR FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS.
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Message Attributes

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